

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 465.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1862.

PRICE 1½d.

THE HURT FAMILY.

It would form a peculiarly interesting study for the genealogist or the antiquarian to endeavour to trace back the Hurt family to its commencement. It is probably of very ancient date. There are records both of it and of its junior branch—the Thinskings—in the very earliest chronicles of the world's history. There is only one limit indeed to their excessive antiquity, and that is this: they were not the very first generation of men and women. Adam and Eve, we are perfectly certain, were not a Mr and Mrs Hurt. For it is peculiar to this family that each generation of them is contemporaneous with one's own parents. They are one's father's and one's mother's friends; and they have known ourselves before we were born, or at least possessed certain information about our appearance in the world, 'in anticipation' of the general public.

In ancient times they must have been very terrible. Towns have been doubtless sacked, and districts ravaged on account of fancied slights committed against this powerful race; and even now their enmity is by all means to be avoided—if it be possible. This, however, is a question to be considered. Is it humanly possible to avoid offending the Hurt family? They have generally a comfortable dwelling with spare rooms in it; tolerable wines (which must be praised), and an abundant table; and they have almost always money to leave behind them. At first sight, therefore, it would seem to be the height of madness in needy persons to give umbrage to such useful folks. To quarrel with the Hurt family is to quarrel with their bread and butter. As when war is desired, however, by the stronger of two nations, a cause of rupture is never wanting, so that offence must needs be given by their humble friends, for which the Hurt family are continually upon the watch. It is not—to do them justice—any base flattery nor even humility for which they look, but they are exacting to a pitiless degree. They demand from their fellow-creatures, what they call 'attention,' which means the fulfilment not only of offices of kindness and duty, but of those superficial conventionalities that Society has instituted, but which are always waived among intimates. No man that ever I heard of, and only the feeblest class of women, is fond of making what are termed 'morning calls'—one of the peculiarities of which, by the by, is that they must not be made

before 2.30 P.M. The whole proceeding is meaningless, and, to the male sex, absolutely degrading. The solemn inquiry addressed to the footman as to whether his mistress is at home, when the heart is fluttering with secret hope that she is not; the expression of regret that parts our hypocritical lips, when we learn she is gone out for a drive, or a walk, or an aerial trip in the Nassau Balloon—no matter how or whither, so long as she is *gone*; the resigned air, on the other hand, with which we ascend the stairs to the drawing-room floor, and the galvanic joy with which we exchange *How-are-you's* for *How d'ye do's*, and then subside into sucking the handle of our umbrellas.

'A beautiful day—isn't it?'

'Yes, indeed it is'—lady looks out of window to make sure though, for in reality she knows nothing about it.

'A great many beautiful days lately.'

'Yes, indeed'—lady lifts up her eyes as if you had pulled a string in connection with them—'we ought to be very thankful.' The thing that the whole country is yearning for being Much Rain.

'We have had a great deal of beautiful weather upon the whole.'

'Yes—we really have,' replies the lady '*considering*'—as though she meant to say considering the malevolence of the laws of nature.

Now these social imbecilities can scarcely afford pleasure to anybody, but if they do not occur at least once in three weeks, the lady, being of the Hurt family, is deeply aggrieved.

'We never see you now, Mr Edward,' she will remark at our next meeting; 'but of course we cannot expect to do so. There is so little attraction to tempt you to Baker Street. Nay, if it were otherwise, you would certainly look in now and then. Pray don't apologise. An old widow woman living by herself in a humdrum fashion cannot expect much attention from young people. Your poor dear father would not have kept away from me so long, but—heigho—times are changed.'

Mrs Hurt has been becoming more and more statuesque with every sentence, and at the close of these remarks her countenance is perfectly rigid. If you would evoke a smile upon it, you must send for a mallet and chisel.

This species of exaction is bad enough even in town, but when you are taking your one month's

holiday at the sea-coast, or in the country, it becomes oppressive indeed. The Hurts live within half-a-dozen miles of the locality we have chosen, a distance which, in their ignorance of the science of projectiles, they term a 'stone's throw.' Under such circumstances, is it not rather strange (they hint to a common friend), that Edward and his wife have only been once to see us—once in ten days? They are sure that there can be nothing so very particular to be done at Pierville or Summerton. They are quite unaware that the great charm of those spots consists in their being homes of idleness—places where a gentleman can go about with a clay pipe; and a lady with her back-hair down; they imagine that a drive in a fusty fly over twelve miles of straight white road would be a more agreeable relaxation than making dick-duck-drakes in the sea with flattish pebbles. They know 'some very nice people, and highly connected' at Pierville—'residents, my dear, with a house and grounds, and well worth knowing'—and they persuade these superior folks to drive to our lodgings, and leave their names upon glazed card-board.—Major and the Hon. Mrs Snuphkins, Cliff House.' An afternoon has then to be sacrificed by my wife in a return-visit; for it will never do for her to call at Cliff House in her sea-side hat, or in the dress in which she sits on the sand and plays with the children. In a few days after that act of self-devotion, she gets a letter from the Hurts that makes her cry. Why, in the name of good-manners, they demand, did not Edward return the Snuphkins's call as well as herself? Was he to put himself, forsooth, above the usages of polite society? Consider the extreme painfulness of the position in which *they*—the Hurts—had been placed by this uncivilised conduct. The major was a person of the greatest good-nature, but it could not but be expected that he would be annoyed. He had been asked to call upon us as a personal favour, although the Snuphkinses never *did* call upon mere visitors—they were so excessively (and justifiably) exclusive—and now they, the Hurts, had laid themselves under that obligation to no purpose. They should positively have to apologise at Cliff House for Edward's queer ways. How different from his dear father, who was all politeness!

If the Hurts live in the same town as yourself, let us trust that it may be London. In that gigantic city it is possible that your domestic acts may escape their cognizance, but in no other place. Liverpool is not extensive enough to hinder this, I *know*—nor yet Manchester. They will know within twenty-four hours—I do not say of your having had a *dinner-party*, for they will be in possession of *that* fact before it comes off, but—of your having asked a friend to stay and take pot-luck. Now that is a thing, they will beg to observe, that you have never asked *them* to do. In all the years they have known you, since you were *That* high [as if boys of two feet two inches could ask people to dinner], you have never yet asked them to drop in in a friendly way. They don't complain of this—far from it; they have been taught to expect too much, perhaps, from the genial hospitalities of your poor dear father—only they must say they like a little attention. They would not have easily forgotten a kindness of this sort, as would be the case in all probability with Mr Jones, the guest in question. For who is this Mr Jones? A respectable individual, they hope, although the name of Jones has been mixed up with some very strange transactions, but a man of yesterday, a creature of the hour. Of course, Edward might ask whom he liked, and not ask others; but it did seem, to say the least of it, Very Strange.

Now, to have asked any member of the Hurt family to take pot-luck, would have been an act of rashness equivalent to that of a ship's captain inviting a party of friends to smoke in the powder-magazine. It would

be perfectly certain to bring about a blow-up. The lack of anything at the dinner-table would be ascribed, not to want of preparation, but to a deliberate act of contempt towards him or her.

'No cauliflower—great Heavens, no cauliflower!' were the last words ever uttered to me by Richard Hurt, M.D., my godfather, who having been invited to our table in a hurry, was so offended by the absence of his favourite vegetable, that he took himself off incontinently in a Hansom, and passed the time which should have been devoted to wine and walnuts in cutting me out of his will.

It is not, however, to be imagined that sensitiveness is the cause of the impracticability of the Hurt family; they are only egotistically irritable, or to express it in one word without any synonym, they are Tonic. They do not shrink, as sensitive people do, from every description of fracas; but, on the contrary, delight in the same. The female Hurts are attracted to a misunderstanding just as a fighting butcher-boy is drawn towards a street row. They amplify it, they complicate it, they endeavour to ward off any reasonable explanation of it, exactly as the butcher-boy swells the tumult, and endeavours to divert the attention of the police. When they have got themselves well offended, they rise majestically, they sweep from the scene of action with imperial scorn, they waver upon the staircase, they burst into floods of tears in the four-wheeled cab, and arrive at their own house outraged and happy. The frame of mind which suits their natures best is that which is called 'a Huff.' They are conscious of indignity, of unspeakable wrong, of having experienced the basest ingratitude; but, on the other hand, how their heart yearns toward the wretches whom it is its duty from henceforth to forget! If it had only been an enemy that had done this—but Edward—well, they only most sincerely hope that it will not make his poor dear father turn in his grave!

The Hurts, who are really excellent people, have a very large circle of friends who are constantly being lost for ever to their bosoms—'I may forgive, my dear, but I can never, *never* forget the behaviour of those Robinsons'—or being received back again with the most affecting ceremonies. To keep on good terms with them, and at the same time to be intimate, is not, I believe, in the power of man, and certainly not in that of woman. Total and immediate flight from their neighbourhood may indeed offend them mortally, but I think this course to be less dangerous than the living in the same town, or metropolitan district. Even in this case, however, the perils of letter-writing to the Hurt family have to be encountered.

Mrs Hurt writes to one's wife, 'Of course you have much to do, my dear, with your fourteen children, and I trust I am not inconsiderate—that is the *last* thing, I think, I can be accused of—but a letter from you *now* and *then*, say once a week, would be a pleasant attention. As for Edward, of course he never condescends to drop me one line; his poor dear father was one of the best correspondents that ever breathed.'

HOW THE COUNTRY-PEOPLE CAME TO THE EXHIBITION.

Now that the International Exhibition, with all its beauties and oddities, its merits and shortcomings, has ended, and its varied contents placed under the management of packers and carriers, we may be curious to know how far the provincials, especially the artisans and labourers, have made themselves acquainted with its contents.

Nearly all the visitors arrived by railway. In 1851, this was not so much the case; for there were then nearly four thousand miles of railway *less* in the United Kingdom than at the present time. There is

now scarcely a town of any note in England without its connection by rail with the metropolis; and as the companies adopt more than ever the system of 'through booking,' the transit from place to place is more easy than at any former period.

We shall perhaps be correct in saying that, so far as concerns excursion trains, the Midland Company—though by no means as being more benevolent than any of its neighbours—has most benefited the 'young men from the country,' with their fathers, mothers, wives, sweethearts, and sisters; that is, this company inaugurated a system which the others were obliged to follow, and which has proved very convenient for visitors to London. Having brought its railway, by successive steps, to a point only about thirty miles from the metropolis, it made a bold grasp at a share of traffic which did not originally belong to the Midland system. The Great Northern, by virtue of an agreement, is bound to accommodate the Midland at King's Cross, and thence to Hitchin; and the Midland has made use of this route in a way which was certainly convenient to country excursionists. Now, let us mark the curious links in a chain, tending to shew how very advantageous it is that some competition—though very far short of the point of recklessness—should exist between railway companies. When the Midland company offered to bring country-folks, at convenient times and very low fares, from Nottingham, Sheffield, Lincoln, Doncaster, Leeds, Bradford, &c., the Great Northern could not hesitate to do the same, having stations at those very same towns: this was link the first. Link the second was thus formed: as the Great Northern and the North Western companies both run trains between London and Leeds, Huddersfield, Ashton, Manchester, and Liverpool, what the one does the other must do in regard to excursion trains; and this was pretty well shewn during the recent season. Link the third: the North Western and the Great Western companies both accommodate Oxford, Leamington, Warwick, Birmingham, Dudley, Wolverhampton, Wellington, Shrewsbury, Chester, Birkenhead, Warrington, Liverpool, and Manchester; and whenever the one company politely invites the inhabitants of those busy towns to make an excursion to London, the other is sure to do the same thing, at the same fares, generally on the same days and hours, and with the same privileges, whether the profit be great or small. Thus it happens that in all these excursion matters, much depends on the nature of the plan first started, for whichever company chooses to fix the lowest rates, the others follow promptly.

Under any circumstances, the several companies would have laid plans for accommodating excursionists to London during the recent season; but we believe that the particular system adopted was due to the Midland in the first instance. Be that as it may, all the four great companies, for a period of more than four months, accommodated the Northern and Midland towns in a way remarkable for its regularity. Three times a week, at convenient hours in the morning, excursion trains started from all, or nearly all, the above-named towns, and from three or four times as many minor places, arriving at King's Cross, Euston Square, or Paddington, in the afternoon or early in the evening, laden with living freights of great amount. The excursionists had the option of returning on the second, fourth, or seventh day afterwards; or, sometimes, the third, fifth, and eleventh days. It really was a very convenient arrangement, elastic enough to suit the necessities of a wide range of persons, in regard to time; while as to expense, the placards so abundantly distributed shewed that there was not much to complain of in this matter. A Leeds' man would certainly not deem seven shillings too much for a journey to London and back, giving him a choice between three different days for returning.

The untiring efforts of those who determined to 'do' the Exhibition in one day, were such as the persons concerned will remember as among the achievements of their lives. Some of the companies put on trains at about five in the morning, brought up the excursionists by breakfast-time, to spend eight or nine hours in London as they pleased or as they could, boxed them into their railway carriages again about six or seven in the evening, and deposited them at their city or town at midnight. A Leeds' excursion train, at the extremely low price of five shillings for nearly four hundred miles, beat this, however, altogether. The excursionists started soon after midnight, travelled slowly in the 'sma' hours, got to King's Cross about eight or nine, and then set off for their day's pleasure-hunting; at eight in the evening they took their seats again in the train, and were deposited at Leeds at four the next morning. But a school-excursion from Lancaster beat even this. A large number of teachers, pupil-teachers, and children's friends, started off at nine o'clock one evening, and reached London at six in the morning; after spending fifteen hours in the metropolis, they commenced their return-journey at nine in the evening, and reached Lancaster at six the next morning—thirty-three hours of continuous hard work; for visiting Exhibitions is hard work; and unquestionably so is sitting in a third class carriage at night, with nothing to look at but sleepy companions, and with that constraint of attitude which might lead a neighbour to ask in the benevolent language of our day, 'How's your poor feet?' These excursionists were conveyed at the rate of about eight miles for a penny!

As to the other companies, in the east, south, and west, they did not press each other so closely as to indulge in such watchful competition; and, as a consequence, the accommodation for excursionists was less profuse. In most cases there was a Monday train, returnable on some one specified day in the week; and it is known that the trains from the west to Paddington Station were something enormous in magnitude.

Londoners knew little about these things until they saw the country-folk after their arrival, or until a promised visit to London friends was about to be made; for these exhibition trains (as they were called) were seldom advertised or placarded except in and near the towns from which they started, or which they accommodated on their way; but whoever was called, by business or pleasure, to any country town having a railway-station belonging to it, from Berwick and Carlisle in the north, to Ramsgate and Penzance in the south, would have had ample opportunity, during last summer, of seeing how numerous and how cheap were the Exhibition trains. Whether there were as many country visitors at the Exhibition as were expected, is a matter of opinion; but the railway facilities, as soon as the 'Shilling-days' began, were certainly on a liberal scale.

Much more difficult than to determine how the country-folk came to London, would be to determine where they lodged and slept when in London. The metropolis is not happy in its arrangements in this respect. After saying all that can be said for and against hotels, inns, public-houses, coffee-shops, and lodging-houses, there is a great gap in our means of accommodating a large number of strangers of one class, coming to London at one time. In 1851, two or three capital arrangements were made in this matter. Messrs Garrett, the eminent agricultural implement makers at Leiston in Suffolk, chartered two vessels to bring all their work-people to London. These were fitted with sleeping-berths, cooking apparatus, and all available accommodation for making them the homes of the visitors until their return to Suffolk. A shipowner at Westminster allowed the vessels to be drawn up by the side of

his quay or wharf, with free ingress and egress. Four bullocks, ten pigs, the materials for a large number of plum-puddings, several barrels of ale, and other provisions, were laid in. The meal-times were strictly defined; the time of return at night to the vessels was also defined; a foreman superintended everything and everybody; and daily plans were marked out for visiting other attractive places besides the Great Exhibition.

Another example was furnished by the Duke of Northumberland, who organised a trip for a hundred and fifty of his humbler dependents at Alnwick. Where he provided sleeping accommodation for them, we do not at this moment remember; but all the details of plan were laid out with exactness before they left their northern home. The pleasures of each day were denoted in a printed card given to each person. They thus learned all the particulars as to the days and hours on which they were to visit the Great Exhibition, Westminster Abbey, Guildhall, the Tower, the Thames Tunnel, Houses of Parliament, British Museum, Regent's Park, Zoological Gardens, St Paul's, steam-boat trips on the Thames, Northumberland House (one of the duke's mansions), railway to Brentford, and thence on foot to Sion House (another property of the duke's). One entire week was spent in this way; and we may be certain that that week will live in the memories of the Northumberland men as long as they remember anything.

Concerning the recent Exhibition, there were doubtless similar instances of kindness in considerable number; but there was one particular scheme worth noticing, not for its benevolence, but because it was a self-paying, well-managed commercial speculation. This was the *Excursionists' Visitors' Home*. To understand how this plan was formed, we must advert to the fact that some railway companies have an excursion manager, whose duty it is to organise the places, times, fares, and tickets of excursion trains; while others are willing to manage their excursion traffic, by the same agency as the ordinary traffic. There are *entrepreneurs*, moreover, who do not belong to the companies at all; middlemen, who hire a train on speculation, and make the best they can out of it. This does not refer to isolated hirings for a school, factory, trade-guild, or such like—where, perhaps, the Secretary of the 'United Auxiliary Branch of the Central Division of the Grand Fraternity of the Eternal Order of Funny Fellows' organises a trip and a feast for that illustrious brotherhood—but to regular systems, well digested, and extensively carried out. Mr Cook, of Leicester, is perhaps the leader among these excursion projectors. What arrangements he makes with the companies, is a question for him and them alone; but his arrangements with the public must require no little thought and care, seeing that they involve contracts with probably half the railway companies in Great Britain. Every summer, for many years past, he has arranged excursions from the midland districts of England to the pleasure-spots all round—Scarborough and Bridlington, the mountains and lochs of Scotland, the lake district of Westmoreland and Cumberland, North Wales and Snowdon, Monmouthshire and the Wye, and so forth. Packets, or cases of tickets are issued in some of these instances, franking the owner in coaches and steam-boats, as well as railways—one preliminary payment sufficing for all.

It was chiefly for the mid-counties' folk that Mr Cook planned the Visitors' Home in London during the recent Exhibition: a home that was scarcely known to the Londoners, because it was intended for country persons who had no London friends prepared to lodge them. 'Not many hundred miles,' as story-tellers say, from the Exhibition, is a large cluster of model dwellings, lodging-houses for the working-classes, only recently finished. These, or as many of

them as might be needed, were hired for the six months of the Exhibition (May to October), and fitted up neatly. This 'Exhibition Visitors' Home' comprised nearly two hundred bedrooms, with a large refreshment-hall. There were about seventy tenements, each of two or three rooms, and each with independent entrances; so that a family or small party might live in privacy if they chose. The great point for a stranger in London is to get a good night's rest and a good breakfast to follow; when once he sallies forth on his day's excursion, he may be safely left to cater for himself. This was the key to the arrangements at the 'Home.' Bed and breakfast for two shillings or half-a-crown, refreshments at other hours of the day as per tariff, and threepence per day for attendance: such were the terms. No one made any lengthened sojourn, seeing that nearly all the visitors were country persons, whose railway excursion-tickets were available for a few days only. Employers of labour, school conductors, clubs, and trade societies, occasionally engaged sets of rooms for a few days at a time; but more frequently the guests comprised small knots of friends and neighbours from country towns. Not unfrequently, however, a Babel of tongues was heard there; for Frenchmen, Germans, and Hamburgers were not insensible to the advantages of a quiet, respectable, temporary home, where they knew exactly what they would have to pay, and would receive much friendly aid in connection with the purpose of their visit to London.

Commissioners and committees, societies and companies, may rely upon it, that the success of excursions and pleasure-parties greatly depends on a little forethought concerning the housing of the excursionists at the end, or in the course, of their journey.

THE GUINEA SMUGGLERS.

A STORY OF THE EAST COAST.

It wanted but a few minutes to seven o'clock on an April evening in the year 1812. The moon, in her second quarter, had just graciously shewn herself to the world, gliding into sight from behind a dark rolling bank of cloud, and like a stately dowager presenting herself to her levée, had called round her her waiting-maids, the lesser stars, and proclaimed the opening of the night. A light wind breathing over the sea ruffled from time to time its silvery plumage, while the bats were twinkling round the cliffs in a ghostly manner, and from time to time the thrushes sang their signals to each other from tree-top to tree-top. There was certainly no doubt about the fact that even Lawyer Wedger thought it a gracious and a pleasant night. A mile from Seaford, and on the chalk-cliffs, was, however, not exactly the place where one would have expected Lawyer Wedger to have been found at such an hour. A clean skin of parchment was a pleasant sight to him than a field of young corn; and a tin deed-box, labelled in white letters, 'Re Dawson,' or 'The Honourable Fitzcarrard's Mortgage,' a sweeter view than the moonlight ever shone on from Seaford cliffs. But let us not think evil even of an attorney. Perhaps a successful action at the assizes, then holding at the neighbouring town, had warmed his millstone heart, and sent Wedger out to bless nature, and in his turn to receive her blessing. My Lord Bacon, in the middle of his bribe-receivings and present-takings from suitors, would often, we are told, go out into his stately garden, and there, taking off his jewelled hat, stand bareheaded in the rain, receiving on his bald cerebrum what he, noble pedant, was pleased to call 'Heaven's benediction.' Why, then, should not Wedger, imitating that great example, and having, perhaps, that morning got his parchment-chains well round some new victim, not have come out to bathe

in the moonshine, and to feel his old wizen heart grow young again in looking at the great gray wall of sea? Surely, even for him, the pale yellow primroses that now lit the dim lanes, the white-frilled daisies starring the grass, the black-bird's song and the infant cry of the lambs, must have had an innocent charm, not without its pleasure—the pleasure as of a child's kiss on an old man's cheek.

Wedger was a hard, cruel, unjust man, every one round Seaford knew; but he had feelings. He had love for that prodigal scapegrace son of his; he was human at least in that one corner of his heart. Why not, then, in others? His manner as a mere lover of nature, however, was rather calculated just at present to excite suspicions. He skulked about in the shade of trees; he evidently shunned the open path; he peered, he pryed, he stared at particular holes in the cliff; in fact, he had more the manner of a terrier looking for a wounded rat, than that of a good man taking an evening-walk. A sarcastic person might have said that he looked as if he had dropped a writ over the cliff somewhere, and was trying to find it. Well, on Lawyer Wedger went along the cliff-path, dogged by that untiring bailiff, his black shadow, for all the world like a blood-hound on the trail, scratching here, nosing there, stopping at this place, hurrying over that place, evidently bent on some mischief, and making straight for a little sea-side inn, the Zebec, the tile-roof of which could just be seen far away to the left.

Suddenly, Wedger started—yes, started as if lightning had fallen and ploughed up the turf at his very feet, then fell on his knees, and crouched in the shadow of a chalk-pit, as if he were trying to make himself as small as he possibly could; at the same time he ground his yellow teeth, slapped his thigh, and exclaimed in a low breath: 'Thank God, I have it at last.'

A red light had shewn itself for an instant from a window of the Zebec, and was answered by some boat out at sea. There could be no doubt about it to any one who knew anything of the bad goings-on at Seaford and its neighbourhood. It was a smuggler's signal that had been given from the window of that public-house—a signal to land, or a signal warning of danger. Lawyer Wedger did not know which, but it gave him a clue he had long wished for, for he now knew that the Zebec was the dépôt of smugglers, as he had suspected. But hush! He rose, and crept towards the edge of the cliff, for just then he heard a faint splash and fall of oars. Suddenly, from out of the dark shadow of a little bay between the cliffs, a long white, ghostly boat, swift as a water-snake, shot out of the darkness into the moonshine; it was pulled by four men, while one, better dressed than a common seaman, stood at the helm, and pointed the boat straight for the French coast. In a moment—and Wedger's eyes received everything with the greediness with which a cat in ambush watches the movements of a nest of young birds—two short masts were raised, and two lugger-sails and a jib were shaken to the wind. The boat, aided by this new power, flew off like a swallow, as the favourable wind caught her sails, and soon passed into the gray dim perspective of the coming night.

In a moment, the dark, wily brain of the lawyer had planned his campaign. It should begin that very moment. He determined at once to steal round the back of the Zebec, get into the road from the assize town, and then return and enter the tavern as if for a glass of grog on his way home from business. He would watch the landlord's manner, and either coax or threaten, as he found it best.

'So it is true,' he said to himself, as he rose to execute the plan, 'and no mare's nest, and I have seen the guinea-boat, after all, and found out where it harbours. A crown to a bad shilling, young Master

Davison, but I stop your courting Polly, and hang you in a wire-basket before April comes round again. Damerham would have it that it was a mere ghost-story, but I stuck to it, it was not, and I'm right.'

Wedger was a lean, shrunken man, with a yellow puckered face, with little spiteful eyes, hair powdered in the old-fashioned way, and with black clothes of a formal and scrupulously respectable cut. Even to his very black gaiters, there was a design in everything he wore. He had once heard of a certain merchant on 'Change who gained a fortune entirely by wearing a frilled shirt, gold seals, and a blue coat and brass buttons; so he determined to dress, too, in character, and assert his special individuality. There was almost a suspicious air of respectability about the guests in the parlour of the Zebec when Wedger entered. Jumper Davison, the landlord, had his arm fondly round the waist of his pretty daughter Polly. Three or four farmers sat gravely at their brandy and water, and looked steadily at the kettle, as if they were watching a tardy chemical experiment. They all rose and bowed, like automatons, through the smoke, as Wedger entered and called for a glass of hot rum and milk. One amphibious sea-coast farmer was in the midst of a stolid sea-song, something about

It blew great guns that night,

It blew with main and might,

With a fury, and a savage lion's roar;

It blew so hard, d'ye see, if you'll credit Ben and me,
It blew away the wig of our brave old commodore.

But even the applause given to this song seemed formal and mechanical, and there was nothing hearty in it at all.

'Rum and milk, Mr Wedger, sir; and how do you do? Any news at 'size? Here, Polly, run and heat the milk at the kitchen-fire; it'll do sooner there. Take a seat, sir. Here; there's room between Muster Jobson and Muster Wilkins.'

'Thank you, friends—thank you, Davison,' said Wedger, bowing coldly and grandly, taking a seat, as if intentionally, not where the landlord bade him, but close to the parlour wall, and laying his loaded stick on the table as he spoke. 'Plenty of sugar, if you please, and not too much rum. I'm a temperate man. Lawyers must keep their heads cool, in order to get other folks to run theirs into hot water, eh, eh? News at the assizes, Davison! Well, not much; except that they expect to hang those three smuggling fellows from Eastbourne.'

There was a slight involuntary shudder ran through the room as the lawyer spoke so coolly of hanging smugglers, and one farmer, perhaps unintentionally, crushed a stray piece of coal with his heel.

'Every one, too, is talking of this guinea-boat that has been seen on the coast lately.'

'Pack of lies!' said Davison sulkily.

'And where's Robert to-night?' said Wedger, looking round for a smart young farmer-cousin of Polly's, who was generally said to be a formidable rival of the old lawyer's in that quarter.

'Gone to Eastbourne for a load of malt,' said Polly blushing, and speaking with nervous haste. 'Didn't you meet him, Mr Wedger?'

'Not I,' said Wedger, in his turn taken somewhat aback, not having been, in fact, near Eastbourne at all that day. 'But lies or no lies,' he added, feeling in his pocket for something, 'the ministers and government believe in it, for the guinea smuggling increases terribly, and here's a proof of it.'

And, as he said this, he drew a large posting-bill out of his pocket, and moistening four wafers, which had been previously attached to the four corners, he stuck it, with a slap of his bony hand, on the parlour-wall, just over Jumper Davison's head.

It read thus:

'GUINEA SMUGGLING.

'This is to give notice to seafaring men and others, that a reward of L.150 is offered to any one who will apprehend or assist in the apprehension of any sailor, boatman, or other on the coast, engaged in smuggling guineas to France. *Vivat Rex.*

WHITEHALL, April 1, 1812.

'Look you here, Mr Wedger,' said the landlord, starting up, quite red in the face, 'I'll not have the paper of my inn parlour spoiled by your cock-and-bull posting-bills, not for you or any lawyer in the county.'

As he said this, Davison angrily stepped forward to peel the obnoxious bill from the wall; but Wedger, putting his back to the bill, to keep it on, for several ready hands were now raised to tear it down, drew out a letter from his breast-pocket, and requested silence. The letter was from the chief-magistrate of Eastbourne, and written by the Secretary of the Home Department. It urged him to do his best to put down the guinea smuggling on the coast, and ordered him to have copies of the posting-bill pasted up in every inn parlour in his county. Penalty for tearing down or refusing to put up the same, L.20; second offence, L.30.

'Now, then,' said Wedger, folding up the letter with a quiet smile, 'I should like to see the man who'll dare to touch that piece of paper.'

No one stepped forward.

'I thought that would damp your courage,' said the lawyer. At that moment Wedger, who was lifting angry Polly's hand to his lips at the doorway, was roughly thrust on one side by a strong, handsome young man, who entered, and asked in a loud voice what all the fuss was about, and 'who was scaring his Polly.'

The farmer pointed to the bill on the wall.

Young Robert, for it was Polly's lover who thus abruptly presented himself, went up to the bill, and with a sancy air of ridicule, read it through, in mimicry of the lawyer's manner. He had completed his perusal, and was about to tear it in two, when Farmer Wilkins caught his hand.

'Stand by,' he said, 'Master Robert, stand by; it's twenty pounds' penalty, the lawyer says, to tear it.'

The young farmer laughed as he peeled off the bill and stuck it on again, turning its face to the wall.

'The bill's dated the first of April,' he said laughing; 'and as the fools in Lunnun have said nothing as to how it is to be stuck up in inn parlours, let me see the lawyer as'll dare to give evidence against us for putting it up as we like. It is all a dream, this guinea-boat. They'll want to hang us next, because we coast-people don't all go and join the men-of-war.'

'Don't, Bob—don't, Robert, dear,' said Polly coaxingly to her lover, laying her hand softly on his arm, and looking up at his angry face with pretty beseeching eyes.

'We don't want spies here, Lawyer Wedger,' said the young man, flashing round suddenly on the rather frightened lawyer. 'That I tell you, though it is my uncle's house. If you come here out of your way to get liquor, you may have it like any other tramp; but you shall not sneak about an honest man's house to work out mischief; and as for Polly, I'll not have her worried. She don't want to have anything to do with you.'

'No, I don't,' said Polly, half crying, half fretfully. 'Take care, take care, young man,' said Wedger, 'or you'll never die quietly in your bed. You have defamed my character, you have insulted his majesty's government. I tell you, you are suspected. Take care. I warn you, that were I not a merciful man, I could frame two actions out of what has occurred only this very night.'

'Frame away, lawyer, and give the devil more clients!' said the young farmer. 'You merciful!—Merciful as a weasel sucking at a hare's blood—'

merciful as the Good'in Sands on a rough night. Ha! ha! I say, friends, a lawyer merciful! Well, that is a better joke than even the fool of a story about the guinea-boat.'

'I warn you,' said Wedger, throwing down the money for the rum and milk, 'there are queer reports at Seaford of this Zebec Inn.'

'And I warn you,' said Jumper Davison, the ex-pilot, and now landlord—'I warn you, for all your nasty threat, that the day you see the guinea-boat, or any one who is in her, will be the worst day in your life.'

'O ho!—So there is a guinea-boat, then,' thought Wedger to himself, as he took up his stick, frowned heavily at every one, and strode out of the room.

'I have them, I have them,' exclaimed he, as he strode rapidly home along the cliff, and closed his hand as he spoke, as if clutching on a living thing. 'I have seen the guinea-boat; I have found its starting-place; I know the signal for its starting. No doubt that young cub of a farmer, too, is one of the lot—and he'll hang. I have them, thank God! I have them in a net; reward and all. O lucky, lucky walk! But—'

This triumphant soliloquy might have lasted till Wedger had reached Seaford, had not a thought of danger suddenly struck a momentary chill through the lawyer's nerves. 'That warning,' he thought, 'what could it mean? Would some friends of the smugglers waylay him?'

It would be well to shew that he was armed. He instantly drew a pistol from his breast-pocket—for he generally went armed—and fired it into the air. There was a flash of light, a report, and then a deeper silence than before. But, to Wedger's astonishment, he was answered by a shot in the direction of the Zebec Inn. Then a blue-light shone out, and cast a lurid, corpse light over the cliff, sea, and inland fields. It seemed almost like an omen of some evil to ensue from the events of that night.

'Signals again!' said Wedger; 'why, the very air's alive with them to-night; but I'll soon smoke out this hive of firework-makers.'

Twenty minutes' more sharp walking brought the lawyer to Seaford. The country town was already still and hushed, for sleep seizes on such places at an early hour, probably because in the daytime it is never very far away from it. There was no sound but the regretful music of the chimes, as they sang the dirge of another hour, and an occasional fitful burst of drunken singing from the Sir Home Popham Inn. Wedger gave a spiteful and suspicious knock at his door—a knock that seemed to say in a staccato way: 'Come, look alive, for I know there is something going on inside that ought not to.' A trembling sinit of a servant, black with heedless industry, came shuffling to the door, and opened it with a rattling of chains. Wedger, like most bad men, was a tyrant; he said, in a cold, stern voice: 'Pru, is my son in?'

Pru faltered out: 'Yes, I think so.'

Wedger stepped back a foot or two, and looked up at the third-floor window. There was no light. He returned. 'Liar!' he said; 'you know he's out drinking and gambling as usual. If you don't tell me when he comes in, I'll discharge you this day fortnight. Mind—d'ye hear?—and look 'ee, call me early, for I have important business with the town-clerk to-morrow.'

There was a crowd of prisoners, smugglers, suitors, watchmen, and sailors, in the outer office of Mr Shipton, the town-clerk, next morning, when Mr Wedger, sending in his name and a line written in pencil on a card, was instantly bowed into the inner sanctum of the great man, to the envy and chagrin of a dozen or so of other visitors.

'The ferret and the terrier always work well together, drat 'em both,' grumbled a farmer in top-

boot
whip
Bu
terri
with
pers
of
Volu
Th
table
othe
bowe
the t
red-t
of fr
'G
as M
pape
'A
have
said
Seaf
recei
irrat
smug
perp
'N
lawy
what
Th
attor
magi
'T
pomp
the t
coat,
at th
How
of go
down
pay i
tell
anyw
Clipp
find
rank
with
City
Co
actua
'B
legal
Th
attor
have
chief
nay,
'S
man,
nettle
big a
dream
sweat
loose
at a
'A
'they
imply
calib
and g
here
rumo
gentl
twen
room
Th
ears,
lawy

boots, flapping the door-mat with his hunting-whip.

But let us follow the lawyer into the great man's terrible presence, where he was in close confabulation with a local magistrate, a pompous and tremendous person, who prided himself much on the circumstance of his having once been in 'the City Light-horse Volunteers.'

There sat the great men, opposite each other, at a table crowded with bundles of papers, depositions, and other magisterial machinery. Now the great man bowed to the right-hand bundles, now to the left—the town-clerk now tugged with his teeth at obdurate red-tape knots, now split up quill pens in the hurry of fretful nibbling.

'Good-morning, Mr Wedger,' said both gentlemen, as Mr Wedger entered, took a seat, and pulled out a paper.

'And what is this—what is this information you have to give us, Mr Wedger? Smuggling, of course,' said the magistrate. 'Oh, those depraved people of Seaford—how long will they trouble us? You received, of course, that ill-judged, and, I may say, irrational proclamation about these imaginary guinea smugglers. I am surprised to find our ministers perpetrating such a blunder.'

'Not so imaginary, I fear, Mr Damerham,' said the lawyer calmly, 'as you will allow, when I tell you what happened to me only yesterday eve.'

The town-clerk looked up in astonishment at an attorney who could actually contradict a live Seaford magistrate.

'To smuggle guineas, sir,' said the magistrate pompously, putting the two thumbs rhetorically into the two arm-holes of his plum-coloured velvet waist-coat, and shaking his large gold seals with indignation at the lawyer's want of logic—'is the act of fools. How can Bonaparte hope to drain a country like ours of gold? What are guineas fit for but to be melted down into bullion? What can the dogs of French pay the misguided men in but worthless assignats? I tell you, sir, the guinea has never been at a premium anywhere. Turn to the 1st Geo. I. cap. 4, or to the Clipping Statute, second Queen Anne—nowhere do I find penalties for this offence, sir. The thing is a rank absurdity. Men do not incur severe penalties without adequate motive. Now, when I was in the City Light-horse Volunteers, there were'—

Could the town-clerk believe his ears—Mr Wedger actually interrupted the magistrate.

'But, Mr Damerham, I have proof; I never move in legal matters without proof.'

The town-clerk was petrified. What, the low attorney of the place—the felon's refuge—dare to have proofs to support a fact contradicted by the chief-magistrate of Seaford! He was astonished—nay, more, he was hurt.

'Some garbled words of a drunken coastguard's-man, I suppose,' said Mr Damerham, somewhat nettled, and referring as he spoke to a corpus juris as big as a family Bible to hide his annoyance; 'some dream of a suborned fisherman, I suppose, again, who swears he has met a great white boat brimming with loose guineas. Tut, tut, Mr Wedger, I am surprised at a man of your years and sense!'

'As for our years,' said Wedger, nettled in his turn, 'they're pretty nearly equal.' Could he mean to imply that their senses were of a very different calibre? Wedger here rose, and laid his old knuckled and gloved hand on the corpus juris: 'I do not come here to waste a magistrate's valuable time with rumours, dreams, or ghost-stories. I come here, gentlemen, to speak of what I myself have seen not twenty-four hours ago, and not a mile from this very room.'

The magistrate and town-clerk pricked up their ears, and stared with positively open mouths as the lawyer related the events of the preceding night,

confirming the current story of the mysterious white boat that, when pursued, seemed always to melt away into the distance.

'Very important evidence, no doubt, very important,' said the magistrate, as Wedger finished his story by urging strong and prompt measures. 'No doubt you have seen, I may even go so far as to say, a smuggling-boat; but why a guinea-boat, Mr Wedger? Dear me, why a guinea-boat, of all things? What proof of the guineas, Mr Wedger? How can we proceed, Mr Town-clerk, on evidence like this? A gentleman sees a white boat, and observes corresponding signals; that's the total of his evidence.'

'Not quite,' said the attorney coldly, between his teeth, as, rising from his chair, he opened the door, and cried with a loud voice to the door-keeper: 'Call John Belton.'

Before the sound of the name thus called had well died away, a thick-set man, closely muffled, entered; what with comforter, long hair, and hat pulled over his eyes, there was no making out face or feature of the man. His own father could not have recognised him. Wedger pulled out a deposition, and read it; the stranger looked straight in his face as he read: 'Deposition of George Wilson, *alias* John Belton, taken down by me for the use of the Seaford magistrates.—April 16, 1812.'

The man nodded assent, as much as to say, 'I'm Wilson.' 'I, George Wilson, depose that I am guard to mail-coach between Eastbourne and London, and that on the 5th of February last, a Jew money-lender, one Ezra Levi of Tabernacle Street, in the Minories, before known to me, came to the coach-office in Lad Lane, and offered me five guineas if I would secretly convey twenty leather sealed bags of guineas from London to Eastbourne, for shipment to Messrs Delesseaux of Gravelines. I was to give them to an old woman in a red cloak, who would be waiting in the inn-yard with a covered tilt-cart when the coach got in. I agreed to take them, and I did so, and have since conveyed ten such loads, one every Tuesday; the last was yesterday. I have turned king's evidence on the promise of a free pardon from the crown, and a promise of the place of coachman of the next mail that is vacant.

(Signed) GEORGE WILSON, *alias* JOHN BELTON.'

'George Wilson, are you the person herein mentioned, and is that your signature?'

'I'm George Wilson, and that's my signature,' said the traitor-guard gruffly, as if rather ashamed of himself.

'Astonishing! astonishing!' gasped the magistrate. 'And may I ask, Mr Wedger, how you became acquainted with this man?'

'That's my secret,' said Wedger, coolly taking snuff, cozy as a hangman when the 'little affair' is comfortably over—it is sufficient that here's the man.'

'And now, sir'—Damerham called every one 'sir,' sometimes as a rebuke, and sometimes as a compliment—turning to Belton, *alias* Wilson, under whose coat appeared suspicious peeps of scarlet, 'can you aid his majesty's government a little more by just telling us the dépôt of those guinea smugglers?'

Wilson scratched his head, and said: 'Well, he didn't know; it was a bad affair. He hoped they wouldn't go and hang any of the poor fellows; but as the cat was almost out of the bag, he saw no harm in making a clean breast of it, and saying that the guineas were, he had heard, taken to some sea-side inn near Seaford.'

'Exactly—the Zebec!' said Wedger, triumphantly pointing the feather-end of a pen he held at the magistrate, who was astonished at the lawyer's presumptuous energy. 'Wilson, you may go; you shall hear from me.'

'I shouldn't wonder if I have some of these sea-dogs after me for this, gentlemen, but I have got

friends here' (tapping his breast-pocket) 'as have settled many a highwayman, and I see no reason why they shouldn't pull just as true on a guinea smuggler. At all events, I've now made clean hands on it, and I wish you a very good-morning, gentlemen. Good-morning, gentlemen all. Good-morning, Mr Wedger. It'll be a pretty stroke as ever you made, netting 'em all; but mind when you trawl for whiting you don't get a shark in the net in mistake.' With this fisherman's metaphor, Wilson muffled up again, doubled himself up like an old man, and departed.

'We'll catch these miscreants next Tuesday,' said Wedger nodding. 'Have two eight-oared custom-house galleys, Mr Damerham, waiting just round the point, beyond Seaford, out of sight of the Zebec, at nightfall. Directly the signal I saw goes up again, one shall pull for the Zebec jetty, and another shall cut off the guinea-boat as it makes for the French coast.'

The magistrate, puffing himself up, said he knew very well what it became him to do without interference or direction. 'Thank you, Mr Wedger.'

Now was the time to put on the handcuffs. Mr Wedger pulled out a letter from the minister of the Home Department, requesting him to give his (Wedger's) best assistance to the Seaford magistrates on the subject of guinea smuggling. The magistrate was cowed; but he bent his head to the storm, and affecting extreme urbanity, he shook Mr Wedger by the hand, and thanked him for his important, he might say his invaluable information.

'Delighted with your help and advice. And now, my dear sir, that business being settled, and we public men having a moment's breathing-time, try a glass of sherry.'

Wedger said he never touched sherry when there was anything to be done.

'Curious! Well, now, it makes me work better, good sherry. And, before we part, let me ask you, my dear sir, how you get on with your son that you once consulted me about; not so wild, I hope? Why not send him to sea? No school for wild youths like a man-of-war.'

Wedger shuddered at the thought of losing his boy; he was softened for a moment by the very idea.

'No,' he said. 'Mr Damerham, you are kind, but I can't part with him. Sir, I love that boy; he is my only child, my only solace, and he reminds me of my dear wife. No; I'll try him again. I think he is sorry for what he does, for only this morning, when I sat on his bed, and warned him of vice, told him how vice turned to crime, and how certainly sooner or later justice overtakes crime—talking of these very guinea smugglers whom we shall soon have on the gallows swinging—he buried his head in the clothes, and seemed struck dumb. No, no, there is grace and innocence in the boy still; he'll do, he'll do, sir. He is my Absalom, but'—

Here the door was thrown open, and a voice shouted in a monotonous way: 'Two smugglers, sir, from Cragford to be examined. Officers took 'em last night, tubs and all, after a tussle.'

'The very thing,' cried Mr Damerham, radiant with an idea at last—'the very thing. Call them in, Mr Town-clerk; they'll be sure to know something about the guineas and the extraordinary white boat.'

'Bring in the Cragford smugglers,' cried the town-clerk grandly, through the cautiously opened door.

The door opened, and four custom-house officers entered, leading between them two rough men in torn pilot-coats, with black and cut faces, and with hands coupled together with bright steel handcuffs. The head-officer advanced, and made his statement.

'Was on duty last night, as ever was, at Cragford Waste, top of Cragford Cliff, when I sees the smugglers' flash-boxes answering along-shore; and presently down a road to the sea-shore cut in the chalk,

I sees, five hundred yards off, about two hundred horses, ridden or led by some fifty men, and on every horse two casks of "Godsend," as we folks call it. The men were in white round frocks, and every one seemed to carry pistols or cutlasses, and they were led by a man on a big black mare, riding between two brandy-tubs. "We shall be soon at home, men," says he, as they passed us.'

'Well, never mind what he said, but get on,' said the Solon. 'And then you stopped them?'

'What! stop two hundred horses and fifty men, your honour? Not I; I knows better. But I flashed my pistol as soon as they were out of sight, and up comes Bill Davis here, to where I lay hid, and we watches.'

'So you watches?' said Mr Damerham sneeringly.

'And we watches, your honour,' said the stolid witness, quite unmoved at the keen sarcasm. 'Presently up goes a rocket—whiz, and who come by but three men, the prisoners and one other.'

'And where is the other? It doesn't do, sir, to let prisoners go!'

'Flat as ninepence, your honour. Ran away, and fell over Cragford Cliff. Got him outside, sir, on a stretcher. Well, as I was observing, these three men begin fastening a rope with hooks to run tubs on to the top of the cliff, when we leaps up. They out with cutlasses, and to it we went, one up, another down, for ten minutes. At last I fetches that black fellow a wipe that cuts him from his nose to his chin.'

Here the black fellow obligingly pointed out on himself the 'cutlash' slash alluded to.

'And he ups and cuts my hat through from crown to brim.' Here he produced the severed hat.

'And but for the blessed iron in it, had sent you after poor Tom Jackson,' said the wounded smuggler.

'Eventually we overpower them, and puts on the darbies; and that is the long and short of it.'

'Your name, prisoners?' said Mr Damerham impressively.

'Matthew Walker' and 'Davy Jones' were the answers.

The magistrate wrote the names down deliberately in a royal hand.

'Lor love you, sir, don't put down that gibberish,' suggested the custom-house officer under breath.

'Them's only make-believe names.'

'Rig in the booms, and coil away the gear, Jack, for we're coming to anchor,' whispered one smuggler to another, as they saw they were about to be examined.

'I think it right to inform you, prisoners,' said the magistrate, 'that your future treatment will depend very much on your present behaviour. And now we want to ask you a question. Have you heard anything about the Seaford guinea smuggling? Do you know anything of it?'

The men looked at each other. The wounded man answered saucily: 'No more than a monkey knows of the bagpipes.'

'Impertinent fellows,' groaned Mr Damerham. 'Oh, you're making pretty rods for your own backs. This is not to be borne. It is no use, officers. Take the men away, and put them both in irons.'

'Lor, it's never no use asking smugglers questions,' said the preventive-men to each other, as they jostled their prisoners into the next room.

'They do say,' said the town-clerk to the magistrate, 'that these guinea smugglers are encouraged and led by some young man of good family.'

'Impossible!' said the great man—'impossible! Young men of family don't take up with smugglers and thieves. Impossible, Mr Town-clerk!'

Mr Wedger, having received many congratulations at his success in unearthing the conspirators, now left the room with many bows and much hand-shaking.

'And now he is fairly gone,' said Mr Damerham,

looking first at the glass-door, next at the keyhole, and then at the town-clerk, 'between ourselves, what is your real impression of this person Wedger? Now, come, speak fairly—remember we are friends.'

'A low, mischievous, dangerous attorney, Mr Damerham, who foment quarrels, inculcates innocent persons, and preys on the widow and orphan; but with much power at head-quarters, ever since he helped Lord Traneover at the last Seaford election. Besides, he has, I am told, a strong personal motive in this case, for he has been slighted by the pretty daughter of the landlord of the Zebec. My advice is, however, don't check him; do whatever he wishes. If you don't, he'll set all the corporation by the ears, and plunge us into endless expenses, sir.'

The magistrate—contradictory and a very lion in public, in order to shew he was not led—in private was a very lamb. He followed the town-clerk's advice to the letter. The attack on the guinea smugglers was carefully planned by Wedger—planned with all the care with which a gamekeeper draws his nets round the covert in anticipation of the next day's shooting. Two custom-house galleys, remarkable for their swiftness, were carefully conveyed into a boatshed not far from the Zebec, and two crews of eight strong, sinewy men, each armed to the teeth, hidden in the same place, prepared, the instant they saw the Zebec's rocket, to run down with the boats, launch them, and pull off after the guinea smugglers. The men were eager for smugglers as half-starved greyhounds for a hare. They had heard that the guinea-boat was painted white, so as to best escape detection at night; but this time, taken by surprise, she would have no chance of escaping. They were all eager for the reward, waved glitteringly before their eyes by Wedger. The sixteen men spent the whole morning of the appointed day in grinding their cutlasses and cleaning their pistols, for they swore, whether dead or alive, no guinea smuggler should that night escape uncaptured.

The night came. It was dark and heavy, as had been anticipated. Almost at the exact moment that Wedger had seen the signal from the Zebec window, a rocket rose up with a swift hiss into the air, and scattered its golden sparks in a momentary shower over the Zebec roof. The next minute, a second rocket rose in answer from some vessel hidden by a point of chalk-cliff. Then there was a sound of muffled oars. 'I think there must be two on 'em,' said a gray old officer, peering intently into the darkness through a diamond hole in the planks of the shed, 'for I hear the oars at the Zebec landing every time as the rocket goes up over the cliff. Now, if I know a spanker-boom from a yard-arm, that there boat never sent up that there rocket. Get your pistols ready, boys, and be ready for a start when I cry "Now!"'

Another moment, and a dark boat could be seen dimly, its cargo taken in, stealing under the cliff, and passing round the shoulder of land. It is not a white boat, then, after all.

'Now!' cried the old boatswain.

The men ran like tigers, with their boats on their shoulders. In a moment they had them in the water, and had leaped into them; in another moment the oars were in the row-locks, and the men pulled swiftly in the train of the smugglers. Suddenly, they swerved round the point of land: two objects met their eyes—the boatswain was right—a large heavy lugger, painted a light-gray colour, evidently to better escape detection at night; and a long, sharp-nosed, white centipede—a sort of boat built specially for swiftness, and with planks no thicker than crown-pieces. They both lay in the dark shadow of the promontory, as if waiting for some signal. In a moment, however, they had caught sight of their enemies, and with a shout of defiance and a blaze of small-arms at the approaching boats, put out to sea, aided by a wind just then blowing freshly from the land. The lugger tacked,

and putting out sweeps that moved like two great wings, bore off in a contrary direction from the attendant boat, that shot across the sea swift as an arrow, and straight for the French coast. At that moment, the moon shone full upon the smuggler as it left the shadow, and shewed its white sides with ghostly distinctness.

At last, then, they were on the trail of the guinea-boat. 'Put your backs to it, lads!' roared the boatswain in command: 'we Cragford men take the guinea-boat; you Seaford lads board the lugger. Pull away with a will, boys—with a will!'

Off dashed the boats, each after its peculiar prey. Let us follow the more important of the two, the guinea-boat, closely pursued as it was by the boatswain and his crew, leaving the lugger to its fate. The coast-blockade men were now so near that they could all but see the faces of the smugglers as they bent savagely at their oars, driving their boat on till its white planks quivered at every stroke.

'Another mile, and we have them between us and the Knockor Sand,' said the boatswain, who was steering; 'our fortune's made if we only get up to them. Give way, then—give way!'

'I think the beggars are planning some mischief, bosun. I hope they ain't going to fling grenades in on us,' said the stroke-oar, as a movement in the guinea-boat was now clearly perceptible.

'Hand-grenades, be hanged, Jack!' said the boatswain; 'but I'll be cursed, though, if they ain't going to fling some of their shiners over, to lighten their craft; and we shall get hold of nothing but an empty purse after all, if we don't look out; so pull, boys, pull.'

The boatswain was right. In the clear moonlight that now shone full on the chase, still much ahead of the blockade-men, a man could be seen stooping over the side of the boat, with a small bag he had dragged to the gunwale, and slash it twice with a knife; the guineas poured out in a golden stream into the sea. Six times he cut open bags, and six times the gold poured into the sea. The coast-blockade men gave a yell of rage and vexation as the bright spadaces flashed in the moonlight and disappeared for ever. The smugglers answered with a laugh of triumph, as their boat, now so much lightened, shot forth as if a steam-engine had suddenly propelled it. In ten minutes, they had gained considerably on their opponents; in another twenty, their boat was out of sight, faded away into the inner brightness of the moonlight.

'If old Harry hasn't had a trick as coxen in that craft to-night, I'm a Dutchman,' growled the boatswain, as reluctantly he gave orders to pull back to the shore.

'And the blessed golden guineas,' said the stroke-oar, 'gone to make oyster-beds of. It's a sin and a shame, that's what I call it. But get home, boys; the cursed boat has witchcraft in it. Master Bosun is right: no one will ever catch it; that's my opinion.'

A more serious misfortune, in the meantime, happened to the companion-boat is soon told. The revenue-men had already headed it, and were turning to board—cutlasses between their teeth and loaded pistols in their belts—when suddenly, to their horror, the lugger boldly put on all sail, and bore straight down on them. There was no possibility of escape. In a moment, their boat was cut in two, and a few shattered planks were all that were left of it. Three of the men, encumbered with their heavy coats, instantly sank; another clung to the rudder, and for a moment or two floated; four others, crying for mercy, clung to the gunwales of the lugger.

'Mercy!' cried one of the smugglers, seizing a carpenter's axe; 'yes, the same mercy, you devils, as the poor fellows who rot in chains at Cragford got: we'll have no one to witness against us.' And as he said

this, with dreadful curses, the wretch lopped at the hands of one of the revenue-men, who fell bleeding into the sea. The other three relinquished their hold, fell backwards, and were almost instantly drowned.

Then, crowding all sail, the lugger steered straight for Gravelines with its crew of murderers and outlaws. The night after this cruel murder, and while all Seaford was shuddering at the news, Wedger's son ran away from his father's house, leaving a short letter behind to say that, sick of the law and the severity and dulness of his father's house, he had enlisted, and hoped no further inquiries would be made for him. Wedger bore the disappointment with deep grief, though he treated the act as a mere young man's caprice, a mere intention. He would soon tire of it, he said; he would return when the freak was over, and all his money was gone.

A few days after, news that could not be gainsaid reached Wedger. The guinea smugglers had been tracked to a fisherman's house in a lonely lane not far beyond Eastbourne. They were going to keep close there all day, and at night to strike into the interior. The murderers of the revenue galley-men were, it was well known, among them.

Wedger's and the magistrate's plans were soon taken. At sunset, a cordon of revenue-men closed in on the cottage; among them, but not in the van of the attacking-party, were Wedger and pompous, strutting Mr Damerham, neither of them much liking the affair, but determined to personally superintend an arrest that might else be bungled, and prove a failure; not, indeed, that either were cowards, but only that fighting was not their profession.

The whole country was crying for the lives of these guilty men, who so long had evaded detection, and whose crimes had now turned public opinion unchangeably against them. 'The gibbet was crying for them,' was the popular saying, and certain popularity awaited the captors.

The attack was so sudden and unexpected, the tired smugglers having set no pickets, and the night being so stormy, that the whole gang were surprised sleeping, drinking, or half disarmed. The blockade-men poured in with cutlasses drawn and pistols cocked. For five minutes the fight was hot and obstinate enough, but at the end of that time six of the smugglers were wounded and manacled, and four lay dead upon the cabin floor under a pile of broken chairs, bottles, and benches. Three or four only of the victorious party were put *hors de combat*.

Into the stifling room, still choked with powder-smoke and slippery with blood, came Mr Wedger and Mr Damerham. The attorney, rubbing his hands, coolly asked 'how many of the rascals had been killed.'

'Four on 'em are dead chickens,' said the boatswain, pulling his forelock, and scraping with his right foot, as a mark of respect to lawful authority; 'and there they lie, just where we shot 'em. I say, you, Jack Tiller, clear off their top hampers, and let's look at their faces. There was one lad, a sort of cap'in, I think, who was very spiteful with his cut-lash, to be sure, till I caught him over the left eye. Turn 'em over, lads, and let's look at their faces.'

The men, half in the dark, cleared away the broken chairs as the boatswain ordered, and dragged out the dead one by one. The first body drawn out was that of the young man the boatswain had shot. He was quite dead; a bullet had struck him just over the left eye. There was a quiet flick smile on his lips.

'Here's the young game-cock,' said the boatswain, touching the body in a friendly manner with his foot. 'Give us a lantern here, one of ye; Mr Wedger wants to look at our dead birds.'

The stroke-oar obediently brought his dark lantern with an 'Ay, ay, sir,' and turned it full and suddenly on the face of the dead youth; but Wedger

was standing with his back to the body, talking to Mr Damerham at the time, and for a moment did not turn round. The boatswain, pulling the attorney respectfully by the sleeve, asked him if he wouldn't like to see 'the dead rogues who had gone and shirked the gallows.'

Wedger, half petulantly turning round, said: 'Certainly.'

The boatswain pointed down silently to the dead youth, on whose face the stroke-oar's lantern was shedding a strong yellow light.

Wedger turned, and gave one keen look; the next moment, without saying a word, he threw his arms into the air, and fell in a deathlike swoon on the body. It was the attorney's wretched son. The poor scapegrace had long been secretly enrolled in the gang of guinea smugglers.

Wedger never wholly rallied; on recovering from his swoon, paralysis seized him, and he died within the year, a broken-hearted, imbecile man.

Of the guinea smugglers, three were hung, and the rest transported. Jumper Davison, with Polly and her lover, fled to France, and soon after embarked for America, where they eventually did well.

As for Mr Damerham, he told his stories of the guinea smugglers and the City Light-horse Volunteers till he reached a good old age, and finally, like other City Light-horse Volunteers, he died, leaving behind him an epitaph, written by himself, in the character of virtuous church-warden, in large gilt letters, on the front of the organ gallery in Seaford Church.

THE MAMMOTH TREES OF CALIFORNIA.

THE *Sequoia gigantea*, popularly known in the district where it grows as the Mammoth Washington Tree, was first discovered by the English traveller and naturalist Lob, on the Sierra Nevada, at an elevation of five thousand feet, and near the source of the rivers Stanislaus and San Antonio. These trees belong to the natural order *Conifera*, or the Pine family, and grow two hundred and fifty, and even four hundred feet in height. The bark, which is of a cinnamon colour, is from twelve to eighteen inches thick; the wood reddish, but soft and light; and the stem from ten to twenty feet in diameter. The branches grow almost horizontally from the stem; their foliage resembles that of the cypress; yet, notwithstanding the monstrous size of these trees, their cones are only two inches and a half in length, resembling those of the Weymouth Pine (*Pinus strobus*); whilst the *Auracaria*, or South American Pine, although far inferior in size to the *Sequoia*, produces cones of the form and magnitude of a child's head.

The *Sequoias* stand together in groups on a black, fruitful soil, which is watered by a brook. The miners have given some of them their especial consideration. One has been called 'The Miner's Cabin'; it is a hollow tree about three hundred feet in height, the excavation being seventeen feet in breadth, and nearly fifty feet in circumference. 'The Three Sisters' have all sprung from the same root; 'The Old Bachelor,' worried by storms, leads a solitary life. 'The Family,' consists of a group of trees—two large ones, 'The Parents,' and twenty-four small ones, 'The Children.' 'The Riding School' is an immense tree which has been overturned by a storm, in the hollow stem of which a man can ride on horseback for a distance of seventy-five feet.

In standing before these giant forms of the forest, we naturally try to calculate the time which was necessary to bring together such vast masses of vegetable matter, and then think of our own short lives and diminutiveness. Judging from their rings, these trees are at least from two to three thousand years old. The following description of one of them

recently felled for timber is taken from a work published by the government of the United States.

'As there has been already considerable discussion with regard to the age of this tree,' says Dr Bigelow, 'I may state that when I visited it in May last, at a section of it eighteen feet from the stump, it was fourteen and a half feet in diameter. As the diminution of the annual rings of growth, from the heart or centre to the circumference or sap-wood, appeared pretty regular, I placed my hand midway, roughly measuring six inches, and carefully counted the rings on that space, which numbered one hundred and thirty, making the tree 1885 years old.

'A verbal or written description of this tree, however accurate, cannot give one an adequate idea of its dimensions. It required thirty-one of my paces, of three feet each, to measure thus rudely its circumference at the stump. The only way it could be felled was by boring repeatedly with pump augers. It required five men twenty-two days to perform the operation. After they had succeeded in severing it at the stump, the shoulders were so broad, and the tree so perfectly equipoised, that it took the same five men two days in driving wedges with a battering-ram, on one side of the cut, to throw it out of its equilibrium sufficiently to make it fall. The mere felling of the tree, at California wages, cost the sum of five hundred and fifty dollars, or one hundred and ten pounds.

'A short distance from this tree was another of yet larger dimensions, which apparently had been overthrown by accident, some forty or fifty years ago. It was hollow for some distance, and when I was there, quite a rivulet was running through its cavity. The trunk was three hundred feet in length, the top broken off, and by some agency (probably fire) was destroyed. At the distance of three hundred feet from the butt, the trunk was forty feet in circumference, or more than twelve feet in diameter. Fragments of the same kind of tree, which had apparently been exposed to the vicissitudes of climate and the weather the same length of time, and supposed to be from the individual tree that lies prostrate, are to be found projected in a line with the main body, one hundred and fifty feet from the top, proving to a degree of moral certainty that the tree, when standing alive, must have attained the height of four hundred and fifty or five hundred feet! At the butt, it is one hundred and ten feet in circumference, or about thirty-six feet in diameter.

'These mammoth trees, by their stately and majestic bearing, strike the beholder with awe and wonder, and cause him almost involuntarily to bow before them, as the kings of the forest. Their whole number does not exceed five hundred, and all are comprised within an area of about fifty acres. Only eighty or ninety of them are of gigantic size. Their extremely limited locality and number forcibly impress the traveller with the belief that the species will soon be extinct, as is further evinced by their slow reproduction. Indeed, these giants of the forest are so marked in their rusty habits from their present associates, that we can hardly view them in their present relations except as links connecting us with ages so long past that they seem but reminiscences of an eternal bygone. They seem to require but the process of petrification to establish a complete Paleontological era.'

The above opinion, advanced by Dr Bigelow, that the species are about to become extinct, has received confirmation by the recent discovery of a fossil sequoia in England. In vol. xi, No. 47, *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, November 21, 1861, page 453, there is a communication from Sir Charles Lyell, in which it is stated, that in the Miocene formation at Bovey Tracey, Devonshire, among the lignites and clays, an extinct form of the Sequoia has been found. It is called the *Sequoia Couttsia*,

after Miss Burdett Coutts. 'A conifer which can be illustrated by the remains of branches of every age, by cones and seeds. It supplies a highly important link between *Sequoia Langsdorfi* and *Sequoia Sternbergi*, the widely distributed representatives of *Sequoia sempervirens* and *Sequoia gigantea* (Wellingtonia), whose occurrence in the present creation is confined to California. The lignite beds consist almost entirely of tree stems—probably belonging in a great measure to *Sequoia Couttsia*—which have apparently been floated hither, not only from the circuit of the immediate hills, but doubtless also from greater distances. The 26th bed in the series immediately above the thick bed of sand is a soft clay, with numerous leaves of plants and ripe cones and seeds of *Sequoia Couttsia*. This bed was probably formed in autumn, and the plants it contains are due to the driftings of that season. Higher up, follows the bed 25, with fern rhizomes, and occasionally pinnules of *Pecopteris lignitum*; the latter appears in great abundance with branches of *Sequoia Couttsia* still higher.'

HOME FROM THE COLONIES.

THE NOBLEMAN'S FÊTE—AND THE WOOLLY WOMAN'S.

THERE are certain changes taking place in our little household in Half-moon Street, which affect me more perhaps than they should. If I had been told six months ago that I should be having the heartache now in consequence of a coming parting with *any* friends, I should have smiled, though sadly, at the prophet; and if he had added that these friends were such as X and Y, I should have laughed outright in his face. As marriages are made in heaven, however, so friendships are not manufactured to order upon this planet. Man is not a demi-bivalve, that he should annex himself to one precisely similar to himself; if so, where should I have found the double of a sentimental colonist of middle-age, inclined to prose, but not averse to be convivial? I protest that the young man X has grown as dear to me as a son to his father; while for Y I entertain those kindly emotions which affect forgiving uncles (on the stage) towards their scapegrace nephews. I feel as if, thanks to me, the dog was living merrily upon post-obits.

These young men can be scarcely unaware of my friendly feelings, and indeed reciprocate them, so far as sociality goes, with the pleasantest freedom; and yet their native delicacy forbids them to derive therefrom any practical advantage. The Trevors of Trevorton were not more proud than Y; nor was my poor brother Thomas a more obstinate mule than is X in one respect. 'The last thing that a gentleman does,' says some old foolish play, 'is to borrow money of his friend;' and this seems to be an immutable canon with the two advertisers. This sentiment is of course an honourable one, and is deep-seated in most Englishmen of condition. I venture, however, to affirm it to be an error founded upon something like vulgarity—upon an undue and commercial regard for mere current coin. I may receive my friend into my house for as long as he pleases, I may mount him on my hunters a whole winter through, I may get his son appointed to a ship in her Majesty's service, I may do him, in short, any good turn one can conceive, but I may neither give him nor lend him Money. Taking low ground, let me ask: What difference is there between money and money's worth? Taking high ground: What, then, is Friendship, that the intervention of a little gold should act as a non-conductor? In Melbourne, there is many a rich man who owes, not only his prosperity, but his very existence, to the help of a friend in a less prosperous time. I have heard one of these at his own dinner-table relate how that, but for a ten-pound note from a generous fellow who had but few of his own to spare, he might have stuck

to sign-painting all his life; and, turning to the man seated on his right hand, he added (and very tenderly for a government contractor): 'That was *you*, Bob, wasn't it?'

This ridiculous delicacy 'overleaps itself, and falls on the other' into what is very like meanness. Do X and Y suppose that, having assisted them in their pecuniary difficulties, I should be so base as hold them debtors rather than friends? I have no doubt whatever that something like this is the case, and it disquiets me. My connection with them as advisee is coming to an end; I cannot much longer prolong it without exciting some morbid suspicion that I do so for their sake, whereas, although I would gladly benefit them, it is I who will suffer most at parting. I protest I shudder at the thought of returning to that solemn Caravansary, that magnificent Mausoleum in which I took up my quarters on coming to town; the thought of the patronage of that head-waiter is hateful and oppressive. How I shall miss the merry laugh of X, although, indeed, I fancy that he is not so blithe as when I first knew him. I heard him sigh the other day when he thought himself alone, in a manner that convinced me he has some secret wretchedness; although he declared to me that it was only the first approach of indigestion, which one must expect at twenty-six.

Last night he left us for some country-house which it seems he has in the west of England; he has gone, as I believe, to effect its sale. Perhaps it is an ancestral place—for Martin is a good name—which it distresses him to part with. If he had but been less reserved, I might have hinted that I was willing to help him, and should myself be glad to visit that district, which must be near what was once my own home. I would persuade him that to have the *entrée* of a friend's house *there* would be worth much to me; but I dare not. I cannot hope to convey to others my sense of the danger of such a step. It will not be conceived that men about town, spendthrifts on their last legs, advertisers, should be so difficult to deal with, but so it is; there is nothing so proud as a proud man growing poor.

Another weakness of theirs is a repugnance to being suspected of doing anything creditable to themselves. This is especially the case with Y; and I am sure I offended him very much this morning by detecting him in a good action. I was awakened at six o'clock or so by the opening of his window; I heard him say: 'Are you the man for Mr Layton?' and then the answer: 'Yes, sir.' Directly afterwards, I heard a soft but apparently extensive body descending the staircase. I opened my door, and, lo, there was Y in his dressing-gown rolling an enormous bundle before him down the stairs. He did not see me, though I watched him all the way, and saw him open the front-door, and having delivered the bundle to the messenger, close it again with great caution, and noiselessly replace the bolts.

At breakfast-time, I exclaimed suddenly: 'And where was the great parcel going to, that you got up so early this morning to dispose of?'

'It was going to Preston, sir, to some people who want clothes more than I do. Have you any other question to ask?'

I never saw Y angry before; and this was the first time he had ever called me 'sir.'

'I am sorry to have been rude,' said I; 'but surely, my dear Y, there is nothing to be ashamed of. Why on earth did you get up at that hour, and perform your benevolent mission with such mystery? Having been a witness to your strange procedure, I could not but be curious.'

'Well,' said Y, 'if you must know the truth, I was afraid of John Thomas. My garments are, as he conceives, his perquisites; and in giving them away, I was committing a robbery. So, you see, I was not so virtuous after all. Whenever you see a man

performing what appears to be a good action, conclude at once he has some mean motive for doing so, and employ your sagacity in discovering it; that is not only good fun, but excellent philosophy. How very odd the Lancashire operatives will look in my pectops!'

It was evident, although he tried to conceal it, that Y was much annoyed. In order to turn the conversation, I began to talk of what should be done in X's absence: 'He is not to return to-day, I think.'

'No, poor fellow,' replied Y; 'and when he does, I am afraid he will be out of spirits.'

'How is that?' asked I with eagerness; for all that I knew of X was from Y, and *vice versa*; they never spoke about themselves.

'Oh, it's a woman, of course,' observed Y bitterly.

'Well, I'm glad it's no worse,' said I: 'the quarrels of lovers are not lasting. I was afraid he had gone on more unpleasant business. From some questions X was putting to me the other day about Australia, I gathered that he was half resolved to emigrate.'

'And why not, O Morumbidgee? I am sure you yourself are an excellent specimen of Transportation.'

I smiled sadly, but did not answer, for my very heart ached for poor X. Y, touched by my silence, the cause of which he partly perceived, continued: 'The fact is, our friend X, like myself, is out at elbows; but, unlike me, he is, or was, in love. Perhaps it is over by this time, for the young lady rises early, and is doubtless now in possession of his circumstances. While he was the squire, and in possession of the big house, the parson of the parish was willing enough to let him have his Arabella. But now the house is to be sold, it is likely she will be retained for the next squire, if he be eligible—if the man and the mansion be equally unencumbered.'

'But do the young people mutually love one another, think you?'

'To distraction, doubtless,' replied Y sardonically; 'that is to say, they did when X started. He will come home, poor fellow, miserable enough; we must do what we can to cheer him. In the meantime, let us cheer ourselves. The autumn is ending, Morumbidgee: we must take our pleasure while we may.'

'Well,' said I, 'we have been to a good number of places less select than otherwise; I should now like to take a look at more exclusive society. There was once an assembly which had a great reputation for fashion at the time I left England; and I perceive by the papers that it is now resuscitated. I have a great fancy, Y, for going to Almack's.'

'Almack's! Al-l-mack's!' exclaimed Y, drawing out the word as though it were a telescope; 'my dear Morumbidgee, what do you mean! Compose yourself. Take a glass of cold water, and read the Shipping Intelligence. You know not what you ask.'

'I simply desire,' said I firmly, 'to witness a scene in which the performers are the aristocracy of my native land. If admission cannot be procured—and I have heard that it is difficult—well and good; but I am unaware that my manners are so rude as to make my request rid'—

'Accomplished Morumbidgee,' interrupted Y with warmth, 'your manners are unexceptionable. Dismiss any notions of inferiority from your mind, and adopt precisely opposite ones. If you were a fool, or even a gentleman of ordinary type, I should say, "Go;" but I know you better than you know yourself, and I tell you, you wouldn't like it. We have had some little experience of life together, my friend; and we are not fitted—either of us, believe me—to "move in the best circles." You are too fond of fun for that, and I of easy slippers. It is a lamentable fact, but the Best Society is dull, and demands boots of polished leather. You are my advisee, and in the absence of X, I must do your bidding; only beware. Remember that evil night at Lady de Squashkin's, when we could not emerge from the third drawing-room, and

had nothing to support nature upon for five mortal hours save a lemon-biscuit and that water-ice which I divided with you, Morumbidgee, with a weak but unflinching hand. What an effort it cost you to keep on your gloves on that occasion! You averred that you were dying with the heat, and yet could not perceive that that was the very reason why it was imperative that you should retain these gloves. Think, too, how indisposed you subsequently were to leave your card upon her ladyship, observing that you were not disinclined to *lunch* with her, but that calling was an absurdity. All this, my friend, exhibits your good sense, but at the same time your unfitness for that scene for which you so indiscreetly pant. What? *You behaved very well at the Opera!* Nay, excuse me. In the first place, the Opera is a house of public amusement, where you can conduct yourself as you like so long as you don't sit with your legs over the front of the box; and, secondly, you did not behave so very well at the Opera. You did not see why your great-coat should be taken away upon admission, and (particularly) why you should have to pay for that abduction when you came away. You compared the very expensive box in which we were accommodated to a four-poster, and the curtains thereof to bed-curtains. The magnificent Duchess of X— (not Arabella), who sat resplendent with feathers immediately opposite to us, you likened to an ancient bird looking out of a pigeon-hole. Instead of being ravished by the melodious notes of the chief singers, you were making sarcastic observations upon the same. You remarked how very much the trombones assisted their deep passions, and how the flutes helped them out with their lighter emotions; with what an admirable self-restraint they curbed their feelings until the expiration of the proper bars, and how their harmonious rage never overstepped the musical limits.

'Yes,' said I laughing, 'I remarked that the spirit and the letter were one indeed.'

'You should not have remarked it, however,' continued Y reprovingly; 'for Humour and Music are deadly enemies. Moreover, three-fourths of your time was occupied in the study of the libretto. You could never find out the place at which the performance had arrived. You complained because Alice never descended slowly from the mountain.'

'And she never did,' said I; 'they cut it all out.'

'That was because it was Saturday night, Morumbidgee. You would not have people be impious, I hope, for the sake of a libretto. But, worst of all, do you remember how you wanted supper? You would have eaten Welsh rarebit upon the Grand Tier, if you could have got it. Then, when they brought us ices, recollect what happened; how you opened the door too hastily, and upset the whole concern, you terrible bushranger! Ah, what a crash was there! We divided the attention of the audience with the chorus of phantom nuns singing, appositely enough—

*Già nelle rete
Caduto è il forte.*

Now in the snare
The brave shall fall.

For how were you to know, simple antipodean, that the box-door opened outward? I do not recall these things to reproach you, friend; but only to convince you of your inability to enjoy yourself under too conventional restrictions. You are silent, but unconvinced. What say you to a *fête champêtre* given in a nobleman's grounds on the river-side. I know of one that takes place to-day, beginning at three o'clock. This will surely be better than Almack's.

'I shall enjoy it of all things,' said I; 'but how will you get tickets?'

'Leave that to me,' replied Y. 'Only bring with you a willing mind.'

At three o'clock, we found ourselves in Villiers Street, Strand, which, now that Hungerford Market is a waste, is The Way to the Steam-boats.

'The tide is low,' quoth Y, 'which is a pity.'
'And how can you possibly know that as yet?' asked I.

'Because there are no boys in the street,' answered my companion. 'When the water is in, they stand on their heads, or "do the wheel," for half-pennies on shore; when the water is out—you shall see for yourself what they do.'

A few steps brought us to the wretched pier, built up of decaying timbers, and ornamented with advertisement boards: on either side of it, knee-deep in the mud, stood the boys, clamouring for largess, and prepared to dive down in the sluggish ooze, to fight with one another, to exhaust a whole vocabulary of abuse, for the smallest copper coin. They were dressed in a uniform suit of darkish but glossy brown, which fitted them more admirably than any they could have procured in Bond Street: this was nothing but mud. When the tide came up, they would presently wash themselves in it, and put on their rags.

'What a sad, sad sight,' said I.

'At all events, it is better fun than Almack's,' returned Y laughing. 'What are you about, Morumbidgee? There will be a murder, and you will be an accessory before the fact.'

Certainly, the tumult among the amphibious throng was something terrible: in a moment of enthusiasm, I had chuckled then half-a-crown. The white coin shimmering for a moment in its velvet bed, had been the signal for a simultaneous plunge of the whole army. Somebody clutched it, and instead of putting it instantly in his mouth (as was the invariable custom, since as yet they had no pockets), he indiscreetly announced his good-fortune by a yell. Then, as a duck with a worm in his mouth is pursued by other ducks, until the prize is torn from his reluctant bill, so the too fortunate treasure-finder was set upon, and even as he fled to shore, with competence in his right hand, and visions of endless tripe and beer in his mind's-eye, was despoiled of his wealth; the robber was in his turn attacked, and with redoubled fury, when suddenly there was a terrible pause—a silence, a solemn closing round of all, as it were round the grave-mouth, and the mud closed over the half-crown, which had escaped their fingers, and lo, there was no tripe and beer for anybody!

After a short voyage, which not even the mud-banks could render wholly unpicturesque, under countless bridges, by palace and by assembly hall, by rotting hovels and stately homes of trade, we arrived at our place of disembarkation. From thence we walked to the gardens, still by the river's side, where the nobleman's fête was to be held. These were tastefully enough laid out, with gleaming statuary contrasting with flower-beds of blue and scarlet, but containing an amount of arbours exceedingly disproportionate to the area of the place.

'I don't admire his lordship's taste,' observed I; 'what on earth does he want with a Grötto and a Hermit's Cave in the heart of London?'

'It's only his excessive exclusiveness,' explained Y. 'It is not every person, even of rank, let me tell you, who comes to these gardens.'

'But the people that are here don't seem to be very aristocratic,' urged I. 'There's a young lady eating an apple.'

'Hush!' said Y; 'or she'll hear you, and very likely throw it at you. People of quality don't care what they do.'

'Well, I should think not,' said I; 'why, her mother's taking beer and ginger-beer mixed!'

'And a very aristocratic drink, too,' replied Y. 'The nobility call it *Shan de Gaff*—a name probably of Norman origin. As for her wiping her mouth with the back of her hand, it is vulgar to remark upon such a circumstance. I am not bound to defend the manners of his lordship's guests. Perhaps some of them are vulgar; the *fête* is for a charitable purpose—

for the benefit of a man of the name of Smith—and our host is therefore not so particular as usual, doubtless. He is, however, liberality itself. Collations are served in yonder bowers to all who wish to dine *al fresco*.'

'Let us by all means have a collation,' said I; 'it is a thing I have often read about, but never seen.'

A collation at his lordship's fête comprehended cold chickens, veal, and ham (pronounced by his retainer 'am), pie, lobster salad, and some custards of a character quite unknown to me. Beneath the bowers was a temple in which a military band was stationed, and around the temple was an enormous platform, upon which at first a score or two, but afterwards many hundred couples, waltzed and Schottisched. It was certainly a pretty sight. The high-born persons of both sexes indulged in an *abandon* (to use the language of their favourite chroniclers) which convinced the beholder that they felt at home: there was none of that haughtiness so unjustly ascribed to them by those who perhaps have no such opportunity as was now afforded of seeing them *chez eux*. The men smoked without reproach: certainly it is the upper classes that lead our civilisation.

When we had dined, we descended into the gardens, now brilliantly illuminated by thousands of coloured lamps; only the Hermit's Cave was appropriately left in shadow, where a venerable man foretold our destinies at a shilling a head—for the benefit of the unfortunate Smith. Emerging from this retreat, we came upon a band of music followed by a detachment of the *élite*, for all the world as Punch and his theatre is pursued by the merest vulgar. To the *Giant*, was emblazoned on a banner borne before them, and our curiosity being aroused by that device, we joined the procession. After a march somewhat unnecessarily circuitous, we came upon an unpretending edifice, for admission to which, however, sixpence a head was demanded for the benefit of the unfortunate Smith. Here a gentleman of no less an altitude than eight feet two inches delighted all eyes by walking up and down an apartment considerably too small for him.

'Upon my word and honour,' observed I, 'this is like a show at a fair. It must certainly be true that our aristocracy is becoming democratic. I am surprised not to see Aunt Sally.'

'His lordship has provided a Woolly Woman instead,' replied Y. 'Let us inspect her, Morumbidgee, before her hand strikes up, and while her salon is comparatively uncrowded.'

A winding passage, imperfectly lighted by a few lamps, brought us to a spacious but empty theatre; we had disbursed a shilling—for the benefit of the unfortunate Smith—at the door, but besides the money-taker, there appeared no mortal in connection with the place. We had somehow arrived upon the stage, and were fronting the desolate vista of unoccupied benches; all was shadow and silence. We waited for the Woolly Woman to appear surrounded by blue fire, or presenting some other startling contrast to the supernatural gloom. But a voice close to my elbow suddenly ejaculated: 'Here you see the Woolly Woman; she is genuine; you are at liberty to take hold of this lock of hair, and to pull it—in moderation.'

I was almost frightened into a fit by the unexpectedness of these remarks; but when I perceived a grave man standing within a few inches of me, and holding out a rope of hair, which certainly did not measure less than seven feet, for me to lay hold of, I obeyed him; in a paroxysm of alarm, I say, I clutched it, partly to steady myself, and partly because I thought it would give him pleasure. At the other end of the rope, however, was an ancient negress, out of whose head it most undoubtedly grew. It was impossible for her to have counterfeited the shriek of agony with which she resented my conduct.

'This is the only instance,' the grave man went on quite calmly, 'of the hair of one of the negro race attaining such lux'—

I heard no more; I fled. I felt convinced that I had irreparably injured that unhappy Woolly Woman, and that to affect an interest in her after what had happened, would be an insult. The rest of my evening was embittered by this involuntary misconduct towards one of an oppressed race. Not even in the pages of Mrs Beecher Stowe does one read of ruffians who use the gray hair of their female slaves with such cruel irreverence. What if I had really loosened it, so that the lock should presently come off, and leave her not only much disfigured—although I cannot say the hair, as hair, was to be admired—but without the means of gaining her livelihood; for it was that single lock that alone made her attractive, the rest of her head being like that of any ordinary negro lady who had reached the age of about 105.

After that, I say, I enjoyed myself no more. Y took me to all the amusements which his lordship had purveyed for our gratification. I beheld flying men cleave the viewless fields of air, while their fellow-mortals quietly partook of sherry-cobler beneath them, in the happy confidence that if they fell they would do so on the spring-board. I saw a 'ballet of action'; I shot wild game and even deer, in a scenic forest, with a rifle and a tenpenny nail; I lost myself irrevocably with Y in the heart of a maze, and had to make a hole through the hedge to get out at, whereby we avoided a gentleman who took toll at the exit, and deprived, I fear, the unfortunate Smith of a couple of sixpences; I watched the Sensation Contortionist tie himself in knots, till I thought he would never come undone again. But the charm of that fête champêtre was gone for me, and I demanded to go home. I had read in works of history of savages such as Alaric, without attaching any peculiar meaning to the phrase, 'he spared neither sex nor age'; but now I knew what it meant. And yet, I suppose, even Alaric never tugged with brutal energy at the gray hair of an exiled negress of 105. To any personal explanation or apology, as I frankly confessed to Y in the cab, I felt myself wholly unequal; but if his lordship could be got to convey to the venerable female my very deep regret at what had occurred, I should feel, I said, in some degree comforted.

'By the by,' said I, 'what is his lordship's name?' 'Same name as the gardens,' returned Y hastily; 'it's a territorial title: but it will never do to write to him about the Woolly Woman. He has nothing to do with the lady whatever. He would wash his hands of the whole concern. This *fête*, he would very justly observe, was entirely for the benefit of the man of the name of Smith.'

'There is something I don't understand about the matter altogether,' returned I. 'I cannot feel entirely convinced that I have been his lordship's guest at all.'

'My dear Morumbidgee,' said Y soothingly, 'you are tired and unnerved. You are encouraging a ridiculous hallucination; go to bed.'

I did go to bed, but the Sensation Contortionist threw somersaults upon my chest in consequence of the collation, and I awoke from a night-mare, in which the Woolly Woman was a conspicuous feature, grasping the bell-pull with both my hands.

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

WE again hear of electro-motive machines, one by an inventor at Bury St Edmunds, the other by M. Bonelli, the well-known mechanic, to whom the electric telegraph in Italy owes much of its efficiency. The solving of the electro-motive problem has been so often announced, that we must wait for further proofs before believing that a machine has really been constructed which will draw a load. It appears,

however, that M. Bonelli has succeeded in making a working-model, which has been tried at Manchester, with promising results. By a peculiar combination of coils, and soft iron bars, excited by a Grove's battery, he causes the machine to run swiftly along a line of rails. A foreign journal, in commenting on this experiment, remarks that an application of the apparatus in an underground tube would furnish the means for very rapid conveyance of letters.

An important step has just been taken towards the much-desired rectification of our national system of weights, the Medical Council having decided in full session that for the purposes of the pharmacopœia there shall be no other weight than pound, ounce, and grain. The scruple and dram are discarded; and henceforth, any practitioner or druggist may prescribe or reckon in grains, or use the ounce as 480 grains, or apply the decimal system, and count from ten grains up to 1000. Whatever be the course adopted, there can be no confusion, as it will be as easy to reckon in grains as in ounces. The new system is to be at once introduced into a new edition of the pharmacopœia, and we hope it will go on until the whole of our weights and measures shall be rectified.

Professor Ansted's paper on Artificial Stone, read before the British Association at Cambridge, shews how, in this particular, art may improve upon nature, and is especially interesting to all persons engaged in building operations. Professor Ansted defines three sorts of artificial stone: terra cotta, cement, and silicious stone, the last being the best of the three, but the highest in price. The silicious stone does not crack in the kiln or suffer from exposure to the weather. It was discovered, as we have before mentioned, by Mr Ransome of Ipswich, and he has since then fully succeeded in giving a flint-like character to other blocks of hardened material. He effects a deposit of silicate of lime within the substance of the mass to be operated on, and then applying to this a solution of chloride of calcium, the hardening process is at once completed. There seems something wonderful in the fact, that a mould full of loose sand can in a few minutes be converted into an apparently indestructible solid. This having been patented, is now known commercially as 'concrete stone.' It has been examined and reported on by a committee, and Professor Ansted says of it: 'It is cheap, being made of almost any rubbish on the spot where it is required, by the aid of materials neither costly nor difficult to convey. It is made with rapidity, and is ready for use without drying or burning. It hardly requires even a temporary shed for the purposes of manufactory, and may be made of any size, and moulded into any form. So far as can be detected, it is subject to no injury from weather, and becomes, in fact, if made with sand, a true sandstone, cemented by silicate of lime, than which there is no better natural material.' The concrete stone has been tried as the bed for a steam-engine, and in the works of the new Underground Railway; and in comparison with Caen and Portland stone, it is immensely stronger: Portland and Caen broke with a strain of 750 and 780 pounds, the concrete stone did not break till it was loaded with a weight of 2122 pounds.

At the beginning of October, M. Mathieu, a French meteorologist, made a communication to the Academy of Sciences at Paris concerning the weather, embodying a series of predictions, which we repeat here, to afford observers in this country an opportunity of verifying his conclusions. We should premise that M. Mathieu bases his calculations on the occurrence of meteors: he sees a connection between them and the weather; and he states as follows: 1. The period from the 7th to the 16th October will be very rainy. More than 50 millimetres of water will be registered at the Observatory, Geneva. 2. The rains of this period will occasion certain disasters in France, par-

ticularly to the south of the forty-seventh degree of latitude. 3. The period from the 23d to the 28th will be rainy at Geneva, and in the neighbouring countries. 4. The period from the 28th October to the 8th November will be rainy in all the south of Europe, but much more in the east than the west. More than 75 millimetres of water will be noted at the Observatory of Turin. There will be great floods in France and Italy, to the south of a line drawn from Cette to the Black Sea, and across to the southern extremity of the Crimea. This is the sum of M. Mathieu's predictions for the thirty-nine days in question. So far as England is concerned, the first was verified, for the period from the 7th to the 16th October was 'very rainy.' In the second and third of M. Mathieu's predictions, England is not concerned; as to the fourth, in which it perhaps is, we have all possible reason for saying it was confirmed by the event, as some of the earlier days of November were decidedly marked by 'Much Rain.' It would obviously be of great advantage to obtain even an approximate knowledge of the weather for five weeks in advance.

The list of little planets now numbers seventy-four, and it would appear that increase of the number depends only on the diligence of observers. But as every fresh discovery only adds to the work of astronomical observatories, to keep the record of the annual movements of the little worlds, it is proposed that the observatories of Europe should divide the work among them, each observatory being responsible for a certain number of the planets. The nineteenth century is as active with astronomical science as with the other sciences which it has so wonderfully advanced. We appear to be on the eve of fresh discoveries as to the constitution of the sun, and the nature of its light and heat. Professor Rodolph Wolf of Zurich has just communicated to different scientific bodies on the continent his observations of sun-spots for 1861. They will now be compared with the magnetic observations of the same year. Lord Rosse's further researches into the far-remote nebulae are published with highly finished illustrations in the *Philosophical Transactions*; and while his lordship pursues the investigation from our side of the globe, we hear that arrangements are making for the establishment of a large reflector in one of our Australian colonies for the observation of southern nebulae. This project has our best wishes for its success, and we hope it will be speedily accomplished, for with a great telescope at work in each hemisphere, the subjects for comparison would be so greatly multiplied, that large additions to our knowledge of the interesting subject might be hoped for. Under circumstances such as these, it seems only fitting that astronomers should receive due honour, and we are glad to see that a statue is to be erected to the memory of Kepler. He died two hundred and thirty-two years ago, and now the observatories of Europe are joining in the contributions towards the proposed memorial, which is to be set up in the little town of Weil, about a dozen miles from Stuttgart, the famous astronomer having been born in that neighbourhood.

A method of staining wood or ivory rose colour has been described before the Academy of Sciences at Paris by M. Monier. It comprises two baths, one containing a solution of iodide of potassium in the proportions of 80 grammes to a quart of water, the other bichloride of mercury in the proportion of 25 grammes to the quart. The ivory or wood is plunged in the first bath, where it is to be left for some hours; it is then transferred to the second bath, in which it becomes of a beautiful rose colour. After drying in the air, the articles can be varnished in the usual way. The baths last a long time without renewal; hence the process is not expensive. It appears to be particularly applicable to vegetable ivory, for the colour of that substance after the dyeing is remarkably beautiful. M. Monier states further

that he dyes wood of a fine chestnut colour by the well-known reaction of sulphhydrate of ammonia upon a salt of tin—protochloride, for example. To obtain this dye, two baths, as in the former case, must be used, with the liquor cold; and the operation can be completed in a few minutes.

Another communication made to the same Academy calls attention to the danger of using copper pipes for the conveyance of gas, because with that metal there is formed inside the pipe a kind of powder, which is so very explosive that it detonates on being touched with a wire. The dangerous properties of this powder were first discovered in New York, where a workman, while blowing into a pipe that was supposed to be choked, was suddenly killed by an explosion. The pipe was examined by Dr Torrey, a competent chemist, and found to contain a black crust and powder which exploded on the slightest touch. Explosion takes place also on exposure to a temperature of 200 degrees centigrade. This dangerous powder is not formed in iron or lead pipes, nor in copper pipes when care has been taken to free the gas entirely from ammonia.

A new kind of paint has been shewn in Paris, which, judging from first experiences, has some important advantages over ordinary paint. It is the invention of M. Oudry of Auteuil, an electro-metallurgist, who, having observed that the copper deposited by the galvanic process could be reduced to an impalpable powder, conceived the notion of using it as the basis of a new paint. Subsequently, he was led to mix this porphyrised copper, as he calls it, with a preparation of benzine, and thus produced a metallic paint which can be easily applied to wood, plaster, cement, or iron. The coating is perfect, it dries quickly, and is free from the unpleasant smell of ordinary paint, after the lapse of twenty-four hours. It becomes lustrous in drying, and may be made to assume the appearance of bronze, either bright or dark, of verd antique, and other minerals, which hitherto have only been produced on a surface of pure copper. The most delicate iron castings, or mouldings, statues and other works in plaster, retain their finest touches when coated with this new paint, with all the appearance of bronze, and will bear weeks of exposure to rain without injury. Encouraged by this success, M. Oudry has carried his experiments further, with a view to ascertain whether the mineral oils of Canada or Pennsylvania could be used as a substitute for benzine. The result is, that these rock oils, as they are called, are found to be well suited to the purpose, and the quality of the paint therewith prepared is said to be much improved. Should this experience be confirmed by other manufacturers, they will find in the cheapness of the American oils an important advantage.

The Society of Acclimation at Paris have received a present of three Chinese sheep, and the animals are now under observation at the establishment in the Bois de Boulogne. M. Legabbe, the donor, of Neuf-chateau in the Vosges, states concerning them: 'I have had a flock of this breed for several years, numbering at the present time more than three hundred. Their fecundity is remarkable, confirming all that has been reported on that subject. The ewes breed regularly twice a year, and produce from two to three lambs, and even up to five, at each birth; so that the flock is a real meat-factory of good quality, and easy to fatten. It was at the school-farm of the department of the Vosges that I procured my first ewes. There was at that time on the farm, as the director assured me, one ewe which had produced ten lambs within the year. The wool is at least as good as that of other sheep, but owing to the breeding habits of the females, the quantity is somewhat less. As it weakens the ewes to suckle more than two lambs at once, I keep twenty goats to serve as nurses. It should be stated, however, that the ewes exhibit no unwillingness to bring up their whole family.'

A present of a very different kind has been sent to the same Society by M. Legrand of Tréport, namely, a hippocampus or sea-horse, which he caught on the shore of that place. This creature, found at times in the Mediterranean, is rare in the Atlantic; it is one of the most curious of fishes, having the head, neck, and mane of a horse, fins placed as if to serve for ears, while the body terminates in the tail of a lizard. It is the same which painters and sculptors have made familiar to us as the horse harnessed to Neptune's car.

We noticed some time ago the adventurous enterprise of Mr Hall of Cincinnati, who started for the polar regions with an earnest hope of discovering further traces and relics of the ill-fated expedition under Sir John Franklin. We hear from St John's, Newfoundland, that Mr Hall has arrived there on his return homewards, having failed in the principal object of his exploration; but it appears that he has found relics of one of the earliest arctic navigators—Frobisher, pieces of coal, wood, and metal; and a trench, or narrow dock, in which certain of Frobisher's crew built a small vessel, hoping to escape therein from captivity among the Esquimaux. Mr Hall heard of two boats containing white men having been seen some years ago by the natives, but whether he can add anything to the information collected by Sir Leopold M'Cintock, is a question which we may hope will be answered at some coming meeting of the Geographical Society. In addition to the relics above mentioned, he has brought home an Esquimaux family.

We hear from Australia that two heretofore unknown rivers have been discovered in Queensland; and that Mr Landsborough, a 'bold and dashing explorer,' has actually crossed the whole country from one side to the other, and appeared in Melbourne in robust health. He travelled for 400 miles along the valley of the Flinders River, and on leaving that, came to a region in which water-holes and grass were abundant, which is not unhealthy, for none of the party suffered from fever or ague. Thus we have another proof that the interior of Australia is not the burning desert which it has long been supposed to be; and many persons will feel pleasure in the fact that so vast a country lies waiting for inhabitants. A few years more, and we shall hear of settlements extending all the way from New South Wales to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

WEDDING WORDS.

A JEWEL for my lady's ear,

A jewel for her finger fine,

A diamond for her bosom dear,

Her bosom that is mine.

Dear glances for my lady's eyes,

Dear looks around her form to twine,

Dear kisses for the lips I prize,

Her dear lips, that are mine.

Dear breathings to her, soft and low,

Of how my lot she's made divine;

Dear silences, my love that shew

For her whose love is mine.

Dear cares lest clouds should shade her way,

That gladness only on her shine,

That she be happy as the May,

Whose lot is one with mine.

Dear wishes hovering round her life,

And tending thoughts, and dreams divine,

To feed with perfect joy the wife

Whose happiness is mine.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.